14

A SERMON OF Good Works.

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PREACHED

At *Feckenham*, in the County of *Worceſter*, on *Thurſday* in *Whitſun-week*, *May* 17, 1697. at the Yearly Meeting of the Feofees, appointed by Sir *Thomas Cookes* Baronet, to manage the Charity given by him, for Educating and Providing for Twelve poor Children there, and for Maintaining a School-maſter to Inſtruct them in Learning and Piety.

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By *JOHN JEPHCOTT*, D. D.
Prebendary of *Worceſter*, and Rector of *All Saints* in the Burrough of *Eveſham*.

Charity ſhall cover the multitude of Sins. 1 Pet. 4. 8.

LONDON:
Printed for *John Jones*, Bookſeller in *Worceſter*; and are to be Sold at the *Dolphin* and *Crown* in St. *Paul*'s Church-yard. 1698.

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At Redenham, in the County of Worcester, on Thursday in Whitsun-week, 1697. at the Yearly Meeting of the Trustees appointed by Sir Thomas Cooke Baronet, to manage the Charity given by him, for Educating and Providing for Twelve poor Children there, and for Maintaining a School-master to Instruct them in Learning and Piety.

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To the Right Worshipful

Sir Tho. Cookes,

OF

Bentley, in the County of *Worcester*,

BARONET.

SIR,

THO' I readily complied with your Request in preaching this Sermon, yet I was, for many Reasons, very unwilling to print it, notwithstanding you were pleased, by several very obliging Messages, to desire it. But after long Deliberation and Advice, I adventure to publish, and present it to you, intreating your candid Acceptance. The manner of handling this excellent Subject, is, I confess, very mean and defective, but the Occasion whereon it was preached very noble and commendable. Such large and useful good Works must not be concealed or undervalued,

valued, but published in the World to the Glory of God, the Encouragement of others, and the due Praise of such worthy Benefactors.

The good Lord preserve your Life and Prosperity, to rectify and compleat what you may find inconvenient or amiss in your pious and ample Charity both at **Feckenham** *and* **Bromsgrove**, *and also to accomplish your greater Designs for the Publick Good. That these your Good Works may effectually advance the Glory of God, and the Good of Mankind, together with your own deserved Honour in this World, and your eternal Happiness in the World to come, is the hearty Prayer of*

SIR,

Your most humble Servant,

Tresham, Novemb. 29. 1697. *John Jephcott.*

A Ser-

A Sermon, &c.

Titus, *ch.* 3. *ver.* 8.

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain Good Works: these things are good, and profitable unto Men.

THE Sum and Business of Christianity is Love and Goodness; its chief and blessed End is to give Glory to God, and restore Happiness to Man: *Life and Immortality is brought to Light through the Gospel.* Wherein the blessed Son of God offers Pardon and Peace to the Penitent, confers Grace and Glory on all Believers; by Faith and Holiness fitting them for Heaven, and by Love and Good Works leading them safe thither. So that this is a faithful Saying, &c. 2 Tim 2. 10.

Both the Occasion, and the Text invite me to discourse of Good Works; wherein shall be consider'd,

1. The Nature of Good Works in general.
2. The Imperfection of them. And
3. The Necessity of maintaining them.

I. I. The Nature of Good Works consists in these Particulars, *viz.* the Matter, Principle, End, and Manner of doing them.

1. The Matter of them must be warranted by the Law of God, which is the perfect and adequate Rule of Vertue and Goodness. Such Things as are commanded by him are good, and such as are forbidden are evil; and those that are neither commanded nor forbidden (and so not properly moral Actions) are neither good nor evil, and may either be done or omitted without Sin: These are as to their Matter indifferent; yet, when done, they are (from the Principle, End and Manner of doing) either good or evil, and must be refer'd to the Glory of God. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.* 1 Cor. 10.31.

This Law that constitutes moral Good is exceeding broad, and made known to us both by Reason and Revelation. There is the Law of Nature written on the Heart of Man, containing the evident Principles, plain Rules, and indelible Characters of Good and Evil, which God hath imprinted on every rational Creature.

Pagans that know not, and those among us that believe not the Holy Scriptures, but despise all revealed Religion, have this natural Law, the Light and Force whereof they cannot extinguish or evade; by which they ought to be ruled, and must be judged; *For as many as have sinned without Law (i. e.* of divine Revelation) *shall perish without Law; and as many as have sinned in the Law, shall be judged by the Law.* Rom. 2. 12. Which brings me to the other part of the divine Law, the Holy Scriptures, wherein the Will of God is fully revealed. These contain all Things necessary to believe and practice, that we may obtain eternal Life,

Life, as our Church teaches. This Doctrin of the Sufficiency and Perfection of the Scriptures, rightly stated, is the solid Foundation whereon our Church and Reformation is built, and an impregnable Bulwark both against Popery and Fanaticism. Acts 6.

This divine Law of Nature and Scripture, is the true Rule and Measure of good Works, obliging the whole Man, reaching both Heart and Life, Conscience and Practice, constituting and commanding all Acts of Piety, Justice, Truth, Temperance, and Charity, both inward and outward. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, with all thy Strength, with all thy Mind, and thy Neighbour as thy self.* This includes the whole Duty of Man, which is not limited only to Acts of Charity and Mercy to our Brethren, but extends to all Piety, Vertue, and Goodness. So that the Poor as well as the Rich are obliged to do good; *We are all his Workmanship in Christ Jesus, created unto Good Works.* Luke 10. 27. Eph. 2. 10.

2. Good Works must also proceed from a good Principle. Now the rational Soul is the Principle, whence all humane Actions flow, *Out of the Heart are the Issues of Life*, which in Man's fallen degenerate State is exceedingly weakened and polluted. *By Original Sin Man is very far from God, and from Original Righteousness, and is of his own Nature inclin'd to Evil*; as our Church teaches from the Scriptures, which say, *The Carnal Mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be*: Hence, *Those that are in the Flesh cannot please God, for out of the evil treasure of the Heart they bring forth that which is evil.* So that the Sinner must be converted to God, the Soul renewed by the Holy Ghost, saving Grace infused into the Heart, Prov. 4. 23. Acts 9. Rom. 8. 7, 8. Luke 6. 45.

that he may be capable of doing what is truly Good.

Good Works then must proceed from a lively Faith in Christ, and a true Love to God, that being pardoned and reconciled to the Father, implanted into the likeness of the Death and Resurrection of the Son, and Partakers of the Holy Ghost, we may be prepared to every good Work.

Habitual Grace in the Soul, and the actual Help of the Holy Spirit, are necessary to well doing; *For it is God that worketh in us both to will and do of his good pleasure.* Phil. 2. 13.

Here's the right Principle of good Works, a sanctified Soul, an honest and good Heart. Doubtless a wicked Man may do Works that are very good and excellent, commanded of God, and profitable to Men; but yet they come short of saving acceptance with God, and miss the blessed Reward of Eternal Life. Thus our Church teaches, *That Works done before the Grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of Faith in Christ Jesus——Yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the Nature of Sin.* Art. 13. Such good Works some have call'd *splendida Peccata*, glittering Sins, mixt Acts, wherein the Evil exceeds the Good, which being weighed in the Balance of the Sanctuary, are found too light. We must therefore purify our Hearts, and cleanse our Hands, that we may do good.

Let none presume that the Heart-searching God will be pleased with the Shell and Carkass of Goodness, or will accept the Hypocrite, that with his Hands does some Good, while his Heart is removed far from God, and fill'd with Wickedness. Be not de-

deceived, God is not mocked. Think not, O impenitent Sinner, to compound with the Almighty for thy Vices, and by some good Deeds to atone for the Wickedness of thy Heart and Life. We must *not halt between two Opinions, we cannot serve two Masters.* Be thy Prayers never so fervent, thy Fasts never so oft and long, thy Alms never so large and beneficial, yet without Faith and Holiness all's lost. *For tho' I give all my Goods to feed the Poor, and give my Body to be burnt and have not Charity,* (i. e. the true love of God, and my Neighbour) *it profiteth me nothing.* Gal. 6. 7. 1 Kings 18. 21. Mat. 6. 24. 1 Cor. 13. 3.

Let us therefore heartily repent, and approve our selves to God in stedfast Faith and fervent Love, inward Holiness and uniform Obedience, that we may be, and do good, to the Glory of God, and our own Happiness; which leads to the next Particular necessary to good Works.

A good End, this, and the former make a good Man. A good frame and a good design, are the good Treasure of the Heart; hereby Man is like God in his imitable Attributes, and moral Perfections.

Now the great and ultimate End of all our Actions, is the glory of God; hither all ought to be referr'd, hereon our Eye and Heart must be fix'd, lest Selfishness, Pride and vain Glory, marr our good Works, and rob us of our Reward in Heaven.

Our blessed Saviour, gives an excellent Caution about Alms, Prayers and Fasts, (applicable to all good Works) *Not to do them before Men, to be seen of them.* The Fault is not meerly to do them before Men; for Publick good Works are a Duty, which in some Cases cannot, in other ought not to be conceal'd; *For our Light must shine before Men,* Mat. 6. 1, 5, 16. Mat. 5. 16.

that

that they may see our good Works, &c. But the fault is to do them, *to be seen of them*; to act as Men on a Stage or Theatre, to be observ'd and applauded only, or chiefly to serve our selves, our own Honour or Advantage.

There are several Ends of the same Action, which may lawfully be propos'd and pursued, as the good of our Brethren, to succour some, and excite others to Charity, and our own Good, Temporal and Spiritual; but these must be subordinate to the supreme end of all, the Glory of God, a sincere aim at which, an habitual good Intention is necessary to a good Work.

But these Two last, (*viz.*) The Temper and Design of the Heart, are inward, and hidden from the World, known to God only, who searches and requires the Heart: Therefore avoid Hypocrisie, approve thy self in Sincerity to God; also avoid Pride and Envy; censure not the good Works of others, on pretence of their Hypocrisie, and secret Wickedness; but Rejoyce, and give Glory to God for the good Works of any; charitably hope they are from a good Heart, and to a right End, and heartily pray they may be Accepted and Rewarded.

Lastly, Good Works must be done in a right Manner.

1. In Righteousness: Charity must be bounded with Justice; we must give our own, for *God hates* Isaiah 16. 8. *Robbery for burnt Offerings.*

2. With chearfulness and readiness of Mind, vigour and joy of Heart; this make them Easie and Pleasant to us, and acceptable both to God and Eccles. 9. 10. Man. *What good therefore thy hand findeth thee to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no good* in them, (or for the Children of Men), *but for a Man to re-*

joyce,

joyce, and to do good in his life; for God *meeteth him that rejoyceth and worketh Righteousness*. Eccles. 3. 12. Isaiah 64. 5.

3. But especially in the Name of the Lord Jesus, the only Mediator between God and Man; from and through whom all saving Grace is conferred on us, and our good Works presented to, and accepted with God. *Whatever, therefore, we do in word or deed, we must do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus.* By his Authority and Command, do as he bids us, to his Glory, referring all to him, and by his Grace, both for Assistance and Acceptance; *Of his fulness we all receive, and grace for grace.* Colos. 3. 17. Jo. 1. 16.

Thus I have consider'd the Nature of good Works, and therein propos'd the right Method of weighing. A good Matter, Principle, End and Manner of doing, are necessary to constitute any Action truly Good. *Bonum est, ex causis integris*, &c. the want of any of them makes it Evil; nor can the abundance of one, supply the Defects of the rest. Be the Act (as to its Matter) never so good, if the Mind and End be naughty it becomes Evil; and be the Mind and Purpose never so pure and right, yet if the Matter be unwarrantable, the Act is Sinful. A bad Principle or End, corrupt the best Action; but a good Heart and Intent, cannot justify a bad one. Nay, tho' Matter, Heart and End be all good, yet if our Works be not done in a right Manner, especially in the Name of Jesus Christ, (if not sprinkled with his Blood) they fall short of Evangelical goodness, and Saving acceptance.

Now, if we consider these Things aright, and thereupon impartially Examine, and exactly Measure ourselves by this perfect Law of God; we shall find, and must confess our Selves very Sinful, and our

our best Works very Imperfect; which is the Second Thing to be consider'd.

II. II. The Imperfection of good Works: They fall short of exact and full conformity to the Divine Law, which is absolutely pure and perfect; commanding all sorts, and the highest degrees of Goodness that humane Nature is capable of in a state of Perfection, which we cannot attain in this World, wherein *the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit*, &c. We justly reject therefore the Groud, and false Doctrin of the *Romanists*, who make void the Law of God to establish their own Traditions; teaching that *the Commands of God may be easily kept, and with small pains*; and that *any Act of Charity, tho' remiss, is sufficient to fulfil all the Precepts*. Behold the Pride and Folly of Man! lessening God, that he may exalt himself; limitting the Divine Law, to enlarge his own goodness; depressing his Duty, that he may advance *Supererogation* and his own *Merits*: but we have not so learned Christ, who enables us to do good Works; which tho' faulty, yet according to the Rigour of the Law, according to the Honour and Manifold Grace of the Gospel, are accepted and rewarded.

Galat. 5. 17.

Bellar. de Justific. Lib. 4. Cap. 11. Bann. in secunda secundæ qu. 44. ar. 5.

Alas! we not only fail in our best Works, but omit much Good, and do much Evil; so that we must with the *Publican stand afar off, and smite on our Breasts, saying, The Lord be Merciful to us Sinners*. The best cannot perfectly obey the Will of God, much less Supererogate or Merit.

Not *Supererogate*, *i. e.* do more, better, and more excellent Works than God hath commanded; for the goodness of any Work consists in its conformity with God's Law; so that what is not commanded, cannot be better than what is.

Love

Love is the Root and Sum of our Duty, the Fruits whereof are many: we have several ways of expressing our Love to God and our Neighbour, in which we are bound to do the most and best we can. God proposes all sorts of good Works to us, that we may chuse the best and fittest for our Circumstances and End.

Thus far we admit *Evangelical Councils*, (but the Poison wrapt up in these innocent Words, must be avoided) for which end the Particulars wherein these *Counsels* are said to consist, shall be considered. As

First, We are commanded to keep our selves chaste and pure in Soul and Body; but whether Married or Single, is at our Liberty, in either State we may perform our Duty. Celibacy (in fit Persons that have the Gift of Continency) affords more Opportunities, and hath fewer Impediments ordinarily to Love and good Works, and is therefore commended to us; *He that can receive it, let him receive it*, but not imposed on us; we are left to chuse which State is best for us, wherein we may most promote the Glory and Service of God; but a single Life is inferiour to Purity and Charity.

Mat. 19. 12.

We must *love our Neighbour as our selves, do good to all as we have opportunity, and honour the Lord with our Substance, and with the first Fruits of all our Encrease*: But since no one Person can do all the outward Acts of Charity and Mercy; therefore we ought to chose, and do the best we can. If we have much, we must give plentifully; if but little, we must do our Diligence gladly to give of that little. We are not ordinarily bound to this or that particular Act of Charity, *Singularia non cadunt sub Arte, nec sub Lege*; but we are bound to use our utmost skill and zeal in well doing; nor is this a Work of Supererogation,

Gal. 6. 10.

Prov. 3. 10.

erogation, enrolling the Righteousness of God's Law, but a Work of Discretion subservient to it, a means and instance of our Love to God, and our Brethren. As to voluntary Poverty, quitting all to live Idely on the Labour of others; this is not a Perfection, but a Fault; such Beggars deserve Correction, not
2 Thessa. 3. 10. Encouragement; *He that will not Labour, let him not Eat.*

In extraordinary Cases, where the glory of God is immediately concern'd, when the pressing Wants of the Church and Poor call for it, when the Safety and Salvation of our Souls require it, we must part with all as the Primitive Christians did; *He that*
Luk. 14. 33. *forsaketh not all that he hath* (in Heart always, in Act when thus call'd) *cannot be Christ's Disciple.* The
Matth. 19. 21. Case of the Rich Man in the Gospel, whom Christ bids *Sell all, and give to the Poor*, &c. reaches not others, but is a particular Command to him only, for discovery of his Pride and Hypocrisie, prescribed as a specifick Medicine to cure his Covetousness. As to Monastick Obedience, nothing need be said, for it's both absurd and unchristian, having no Foundation in Reason or Scripture.

The Particulars then of vowed Celibacy, Poverty, and regular Obedience, whereon the Papists lay so great a stress, wherein they place so much Holiness, Perfection and Merits, are inferior to Charity, and without it nothing worth; being at the best but either a State and Means of doing more good, as Celibacy: Or a Duty in extraordinary Cases, as quitting our Estates, when they cannot be kept with a good Conscience (as Men throw their Goods overboard in a Storm to save their Lives,) or else brutish and dangerous, as their absolute blind Obedience. Each of these, instead of making Men bet-

ter,

ter, are oft abused to make them worse, to cover and nourish Hypocrisie and Vice: When under a Vow of Celibacy, they burn with Lust, and wallow in Lewdness, under a pretence of Poverty, they live in Idleness and Riot: And under colour of Monkish Obedience, they despise Parents, resist Magistrates, corrupt and disturb the Church of God. Such are doubtless the most imperfect Christians, nay, the worst of Men; such Works are so far from pleasing God, that they highly provoke him, who will say to such *Who hath required these things at your Hands?* These are followers of their *Benedict*, *Dominick*, *Francis*, or *Ignatius*, but not of the Blessed Jesus, who will profess to such at the Day of Judgment, *I never knew you, depart from me ye Workers of Iniquity.*

Isaias 1. 12.

Matth. 7. 23.

Our Churches Doctrine shall conclude this Point, *Voluntary Works, besides over and above God's Commandements, which they call Works of Supererogation, cannot be taught without Arrogancy and Impiety.*

Act. 14.

Neither can we *Merit* at the Hand of God; but it's not the word *Merit*, nor the Ecclesiastical tho' improper use of it, that we oppose, but the new and abominable Doctrine of the *Romish* Church, the *Merit of Condignity*, Works to whom, in equality of Justice, eternal Life is due; Works commensurate to the Reward, even to a natural Proportion, as several of their eminent * Schoolmen and Divines teach, and is own'd to be the sense of the † Council of *Trent* in her Canon; *If any Man say, That good works do not truly merit increase of Grace and eternal Life, let him be accursed.* This we reject and abhor, as corrupting the Faith, poisoning Men's Souls, and giving their Priests an undue Dominion over their Consciences and Purses.

* Coster. Enchir. cap. 7. Bellar. de Justific. lib. 5. cap. 17. Suarez de Gratia, lib. 12. cap. 1. n. 18. Vasques in Sam. Secund. Dispu. 214. cap. 5. Rhem. on 2 Tim. 4. 8. & alibe. Grammach. in Sam. Secund. qu. 114. Aug Reding. Defens. concil. Trid.

† Conc. Trid. Sess. 6. Canon 32.

This

This proud wicked Doctrin, that exalts vain Man, that lessens the Grace of God, and excludes (yea as *Ferus* says, blasphemes) the Merits of our Redeemer, we justly condemn.

Ferus in Eccles. 4. & alibi.

For whatever Good we can do, is our bounden Duty, and but a part of what we owe to our God and Saviour, whom we can never requite; what can we render to the Lord for all his Benefits? Alas! we can pay but a few Pence for Ten thousand Talents. Yea, *when we have done all, we are unprofitable Servants*, &c. Nay further, the best fall exceeding short of their Duty, *in many things we offend all.* This sad Truth, both Scripture and Experience plainly teach, the Faults and Confessions of the most eminent Saints are recorded, the pious Fathers of the Christian Church humbly acknowledge and bewail their Sins. Yea, the Council of *Trent*, that decrees for Merits in the same Session, confesses, *That in this mortal Life, the just and holy sometimes fall, at least into light and daily Sins.* And the Head of their Church declares, *That our Merits are a broken reed, that pierce the hand of him that leans upon them; they are a menstruous Cloth, and our best actions mixt with Impurities*, &c.

Luke 17. 10.

James 3. 2.

Con Trid. Sess. 6.

P. Adrian 6. de Sacra. Euch. f. 68.

That Man must be grossly ignorant, both of the extent and spiritual Sense of God's Law, and of his own Heart and Ways, that can dream of his Perfection, he neither knows God, nor himself that dare boast of his Merits.

Moreover, whatever good we do is by the Grace of God in Jesus Christ, without whom we can do nothing. St. *Paul* having said, *I laboured more abundantly than they all*; least he should be mistaken, and his Words perverted to countenance Pride and Vainglory, he corrects himself, or rather instructs us by adding *Yet not I, but the Grace of God that was with me.*

1. Cor. 15. 10.

The

The more good we do, the more we are indebted to God for his help, not he to us; *Not therefore unto us, but unto his Name we give the Glory*, who crowneth not our Merits, but his own Gifts. Psal. 115. 1.

Which Crown is *also a Reward of Grace, not of Debt; the Gift of God, is eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord*, who comforts us, saying; *Fear not little Flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you a Kingdom.* Rom. 4. 4. Rom. 6. 23. Luke 12. 32.

Not then by the Works of Righteousness, that we have done, but of his Mercy he saveth us; which Mercy is most manifested in Heaven, where *He is glorified in his Saints, and admir'd in all them that believe.* Titus 3. 5. 2 Thes. 1. 10.

What hath been said, fully refutes this pernicious Doctrin of Man's Merits; which some of the Jesuits, tho' great Champions for Popery, were well aware of, and therefore either disclaim Merits as *Salmeron*, who advises, That *altho' one be Just, Perfect or Holy, he must not trust in his Works; for our Righteousnesses are uncertain, not pure, but mix'd with many Spots*, &c. Salme. Tom. 7. Tract. 37. n. 20.

Or after a long Dispute for them, fairly give up the Cause, as *Bellarmine* with his *Tutissimum est*, &c. *i. e. It is safest by reason of the uncertainty of our own Righteousness, and the danger of vain Glory, to repose all our confidence in the sole Mercy and Goodness of God.* Bellar. de Justifi. Tom. 4. Lib. 5. C. 7.

Or (to prevent boasting of them) teach as *Coster* doth, *That a just Man cannot tell whether he Merits or not.* Coster Ench. C. 7.

Having clear'd the Doctrin of good Works, from Popish Errors; I proceed to vindicate our Church and Nation, from their spiteful Calumnies, who falsly charge us with the want, neglect and discouraging

Mat. 11. 13. couraging of good Works. *But Wisdom is justified of her Children.*

We live, I confess, in a very degenerate and licentious age, wherein *Iniquity abounds, and the Love of* Mat. 24. 12. *many waxes cold*; wherein *many walk as Enemies of* Phil. 3. 18. *the Cross of Christ, whose God is their Belly, whose Glory is in their Shame, who mind Earthly Things.* So that we have great cause to be deeply humbled before God, and to abhor our selves in Dust and Ashes. Yet to the glory of his Grace, we thankfully acknowledge, there is much good Wheat on the Floor among the Chaff: we have multitudes full of Faith and of good Works, eminent for Piety, Justice, Temperance and Charity, the Lord increase them an hundred Fold: nor hath the Reformation hundred, but highly promoted Piety and Charity in this Kingdom.

A Sermon at S. Mary's Hospital on Wednesday in Easter-Week, April 10th A. D. 1588. P. 17.

The learned Bishop *Andrews* above an hundred Years since, tells us, *That Learning in the Foundation of Schools, and increase of Revenues within Colleges, the Poor in the foundation of Alms-Houses, and encrease of Perpetuities to them, have received greater Help in this Realm, within these forty Years last past, since the Reformation, than it hath in any Realm Christian, no only in the same time, but in many forty Years upwards, during all the time of Popery.*

Nor grow we weary of well doing; for within these last thirty seven Years, since the Restoration of King *Charles* II. (tho' God hath visited us with dreadful Judgments of Pestilence, Fires and Wars, whereby we have been sore troubled) yet praised be the Lord, there have been more excellent, and useful good Works done in this Kingdom, more Churches built, repaired, endowed, augmented; more Schools, Hospitals, Alms-Houses, Corporations

rations and Companies for Charity erected and endowed; more Alms distributed, more publick lasting Monuments of Piety and Charity, than in the same space at any Time, within this Realm, under Popery.

So that while we refute the *Romish* Errors, and abandon their ill Methods, yet both in Doctrin and Practice, we are careful to maintain good Works; which is the last Thing to be consider'd.

III. Let us maintain good Works, for they are indispensably necessary, Effects of saving Faith, whence they flow as Streams from a Fountain, or Light from the Sun; Faith worketh by Love, it purifies the Heart, and brings forth the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness. III.

The *Fruits of the Spirit, are Love, Peace, Joy, long Sufferings, Gentleness, Goodness*, &c. To shew Pity and Mercy, is a prime Dictate of the Law of Nature; this made the Philosopher profess that his Trade was ἀγαθὸν εἶναι to be, and to do good; Love and Goodness are so deeply engraven on the Soul of Man, that whoever razes them out, defaces the Image of God, puts of Humanity, and becomes Bruit or Devil. Gal. 5. 22.

Good Works are expressly commanded in sacred Writ, whose Precepts are so frequent and plain, that those that run may read them. The only Thing that the chief Apostles, at *Jerusalem*, commended to *Paul* and *Barnabas*, was to *Remember the Poor*, which they were forward to do. Yea, the primitive Christians, sold their Possessions to relieve their poor Brethren; and that none might want, they had all Things common: Nor did they only part with their Estates, but were ready to lay down their Lives for each other. Gal. 2. 10. Acts 4. 32.

How

How many, and unhappy, soever our Dissentions and Disputes about Religion are, yet the Lord be praised, all acknowledge, That we ought to love God, and our Neighbour; to serve God, and do good to each other. This is the sum of both Testaments, the Great Command of the Law, and the New Command of the Gospel: Our Religion, our God, and Saviour is Love; this brought the Eternal Son of God from Heaven to redeem us, both his Life, and Death was Love: he went about doing Good, healing Men's Bodies, that he might save their Souls.

The multitude of his Miracles that confirm'd his Divine Mission, and attested the Truth of his saving Doctrin, were Acts of the greatest kindness to afflicted Men, and not only establish our Faith, but excite our Charity. *That the same Mind might be in us that was in Christ Jesus to do good*, which is highly acceptable to God, *with such Sacrifices he is pleased.*

Heb. 13. 16.

Acts 10. 4. Philip 4. 18.

Cornelius his Alms, as well as his Prayers, *came up for a Memorial before God*; and the religious Charity of the *Philippians* to St. *Paul*, was *an Odour of a sweet smell well pleasing to God.*

Tho' his infinite Majesty needs not us vile Wretches, nor any of our Services; his perfect Blessedness depends not on his Creatures, and can neither be augmented by their Goodness, nor diminished by their Wickedness: Yet he is delighted with our Obedience, and accounts the kindness we do our poor Brethren done to himself, *For as much as ye have done it to the least of these, ye have done it unto me.*

Mat. 25. 40.

To shew Mercy to the Poor is our greatest Honour; herein we are like unto God, *Who opens his*

Psal. 145. 16.

his Hand, and fills all things living with Plenteouſneſs. The Rich are honourably imploy'd as Almoners and Stewards of the Sovereign Lord of all the World, by *his goodneſs to provide for the Poor:* The Divine Providence gives them Wealth and Opportunities, and his Grace gives them Hearts to do good, wherein they are the happy Inſtruments of fulfilling God's Promiſes. *The Poor committeth himſelf to God,* Pſal. 10. 14. who ſendeth him to the Rich for Relief, ſaying, as *Pharoah*'s Daughter did to *Moſes* Mother, *Take this Child and nurſe it for me, and I will give thee Wa-* Exod. 2. 9. *ges:* Take theſe poor People, Feed, Cloath, Educate, employ them for me, and I will give thee Wages; what thou beſtoweſt on the Poor put on my account, I'll repay thee. Theſe *we have ever with* Deut. 15. 11. *us;* and they come in God's Name to borrow of us, who condeſcends to be their Security. *He that hath* Prov. 19 17. *Pity on the Poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given he will pay him again: He therefore that hath this Worlds good, and ſeeth his Brother have need,* 1 Joh. 3. 13. *and ſhutteth up his Bowels of Compaſſion from him,* neither the Faith, *nor love of God dwells in him;* and how vile a Miſcreant is he that neither believes nor loves God? Moreover, our Relation to each other, both as Men, and Chriſtians, ſhould enlarge our Charity; we have the ſame Father, the ſame Redeemer, the ſame Faith, the ſame Hope, and ſhould therefore have the ſame fervent Charity. The pooreſt Beggar cloath'd with Rags, and fed with Crumbs that lies at the Rich Man's Gate, or on the Dunghil, is thy Brother, and perhaps in equal or greater favour with God than the moſt wealthy Gallant. Hearken therefore ye Rich Men that neglect and oppreſs the Needy, what St. *James* ſaith, *God hath* James 2. 5. *choſen the Poor of this World rich in Faith, and Heirs*

of the Kingdom, which he hath promiſed to them that love him. There is great force in the Apoſtles
Heb. 13. 3. words, *Remember them that are in Adverſity, as being your ſelves in the Body*, as Members of each other, and ſo under the ſtrongeſt Obligations both of Nature and Grace, to afford mutual Pity and Succour,
Iſa. 58. 7. *Hide not thy ſelf from thy own Fleſh.*

And as ſubject to the ſame, or greater Miſeries, Proud fooliſh Man is too apt to boaſt, and truſt in the multitude of his Riches, to ſay in his Proſperity he ſhall never be moved; but God can quickly ſhift the Scene, and change the brighteſt Proſperity into the darkeſt Sorrows and Diſtreſs, of which both ſacred and profane Story affords abundance of diſmal Examples. God brought *Job* to the Dunghil, *Nebuchadnezzar* to eat Graſs as Oxen, *Darius* to puddle Water, *Bajazet* into an Iron
Pſal. 76. 12. Cage, *&c. He reſtraineth the Spirit of Princes, &c.* When therefore thou beholdeſt thy poor Brother Hungry and Naked, Friendleſs and Helpleſs, harden not thy Heart againſt him, but look on ſuch ſad Objects with Piety and Charity, Thanks to God, and Relief to them. Let the Rich be as ready to give, as the Poor to receive; and the more they increaſe, the greater their Diſtreſs, the more let our Charity abound towards them.

This God expreſly enjoyn'd the *Jews*, *The Poor*
Deut. 15. 11. *ſhall never ceaſe out of the Land, therefore I command thee to open thine Hand wide unto thy Brother, to thy Poor, and to thy Needy in thy Land.*

This alſo is very pleaſant and delightful, love is the Life and joy of the Soul, the Perfection and glory of Man; there's no greater Satisfaction in the World, than doing good, without which, a Man loſes his Time, and lives to none, or ill purpoſe,

He

He is dead while he liveth. It was not King *Hezekiah's* Wealth and Grandeur, but his Goodness that supported his fainting Spirits in his Sickness, and encourag'd him to pray for Recovery, and prevail. Isa. 38. 2.

The good Advice that *Daniel* gave that great King *Nebuchadnezzar* for *lengthning his Tranquility, was to break off his Sins by Righteousness, and his Iniquities by shewing Mercy to the Poor.* When abused Plenty loads and drowns the Epicure; when Riches fill the worldlings Heart with anxious Thoughts to keep and encrease them, with Grief to leave, and Horror to account for them; then the Charitable good Man is fill'd with Peace and Hope, he reflects with Comfort on his good Deeds, and rejoyces that *he hath made to himself Friends with the Mammon of Unrighteousness*; he then finds by happy Experience, *It is more blessed to give, than to receive.* Dan. 4. 27. Acts 20. 35.

These things are good and profitable unto Men. Charity is an effectual Course to advance the Publick Good, to make any Nation flourish; it's the credit and support of Religion, the proof and ornament of our Faith; good Men and good Works, are the Pillars of Church and State; the Chariots of *Israel* and the Horsemen thereof, the strength and beauty of a Kingdom; without these, the World would become a Wilderness, or an *Aceldama*. And God be praised, this Nation is supported and adorned with many excellent and lasting Monuments of pious and useful Charity, whereof this * Country hath its share.

* At Stourbridge, Worcester, Wych, Bromsgrove, Fickenham. See the Advertisement.

It hath ever been the Method of divine Providence to bless the Charitable; thus God dealt with *Israel*, whom he presses to lend and give to their poor Brethren; *Because for this thing, he would bless them in all their Works:* And tho' Gospel-promises and Deut. 15. 10.

Bleſſings are more Spiritual, and ſo much better, yet the Charitable have many Temporal Promiſes, and receive many Temporal Bleſſings: God ever delights in the Proſperity of his Servants, and plenteouſly rewardeth the Merciful in this World, ſo far as tends to his Glory, and their eternal Happineſs; they ſhall proſper as their Soul proſpereth, and further Proſperity is not a Bleſſing but a Curſe. Whatever any unbelieving Worldling may object to the contrary, this is certain, That never any was Impoveriſh'd by Charity; for God ſays, *He that giveth to the Poor, ſhall not lack, and the liberal Soul ſhall be made Fat*, &c.

Pro. 28. 27. 11. 25.

To this purpoſe, the Example of the Widow of *Zarephath* is very remarkable, whoſe kindneſs to the hungry Propher, making him *Firſt* a Cake of her laſt handful of Meal, when her Self and Son were ready to Famiſh, procur'd a miraculous Increaſe to maintain her Self and Family, (for one Year ſay ſome, for three Years ſay others) till God ſent Plenty. *The bleſſing of God maketh rich.*

1 Kings 17. 13.

Munſter. in Loc. Strigilius

Laſtly, By good Works, we obtain a glorious Reward, *We lay up in ſtore a good Foundation againſt the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal Life*; and with a little periſhing Wealth, we purchaſe for our ſelves an everlaſting Inheritance.

Tho' great and wealthy Men have many dangerous Temptations to Pride, Senſuality, Oppreſſion and Cruelty; yet they have great Advantages of Comforts in this World, (if their Vices do not Imbitter and Poiſon them) and for ſecuring their eternal Happineſs in the World to come, if they Feed the Hungry, Cloath the Naked, Viſit the Sick, and Miniſter to the Afflicted; then will the King ſet them on his right Hand, and ſay, *Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit*

Mat. 25. 34.

inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.

Who then that owns a God, and a Providence will neglect well doing? Who that believes the Holy Scriptures, that regards the Precepts, Promiſes and Threats thereof, will be uncharitable? Who that acknowledges the Immortality of the Soul, and the Reſurrection of the Body, that confeſſes a future Judgment, and eternal Rewards and Puniſhments, but will *lay up for himſelf Treaſures in Heaven*, will do all the Good he can, *that he may go into Eternal Life?* Matt. 6. 20. Matt. 25. 46.

To which end, Pride, Senſuality, and Covetouſneſs, muſt be avoided, which ſwallow up all, and leave nothing for God, and the Poor, by theſe Vices, God and Religion are deſpiſed, Juſtice and Charity trampled under foot, Debts unpaid, Tenants Rackt, the Poor Starv'd, and the precious Souls of ſuch proud Epicures and Miſers eternally ruin'd. Let all therefore learn to deny themſelves, that they may enlarge their Alms; a prudent uſeful Charity will be an honour and ſupport to a Family, feeding the Hungry more pleaſing to God than moſt ſumptuous Feaſting, and cloathing the Naked a better Ornament than the fineſt and richeſt Habit. A good Man will learn Humility, and Frugality, to advance Charity; he will ſpend leſs in Superfluities, that he may give more to Pious and Charitable Uſes; *He is merciful and lendeth, he will guide his Affairs with diſcretion,* Pſal. 112. 5. chooſing the moſt proper Objects, Methods and Seaſons of good Works, thereby inhanſing their value, and rendring them more welcome, beautiful, and uſeful.

And on this occaſion, I preſume to commend unto thoſe whom God hath bleſſed with large Eſtates,

States, and charitable Hearts, that most prudent and pious Work of Educating Four Children in Religion, Learning, Vertue, and Labour (after the Example of that *Worthy Gentleman*, who hath appointed this Yearly Meeting *Here*, and another at *Bromsgrove*) that by God's Blessing they may live comfortably, and do service in the World: This would be a most effectual way to take off the Reproach and Burthen of this Nation's Poverty and Vice, which are the sad effects of ill Education and Idleness. And further, such good Works would be more lasting and successful, if done (after the fore-mentioned Heroick Patern) in the Life-time of the Benefactor.

See the Advertisement.

A Man's own Hands are the best Executors, and his own Eyes the best Overseers of his Charity, that what's wanting may be supply'd, what's amiss rectify'd, and what would overthrow or defeat the good Ends thereof, prevented or remov'd by the Founder. Such good Works are seldom perfected, and well settled at once; and Posthumous Charity, through want of Integrity, Skill, or Care in the Trustees and Managers, is too oft lost, or becomes trivial and unuseful.

We must also be careful to maintain the good Works of others, against the ill Tongues and ill Hands of wicked Men.

Against the ill Tongues of Envious Worldlings, that cruelly, disdainfully and despitfully speak against the Righteous, and their good Deeds, scornfully shooting out their poisonous Arrows, even bitter Words; and when the Work is too bright and firm to be sullied, or wounded with Malice and Lies, then they boldly claim the divine Prerogative of searching the Heart, and unwarrantably censure the

Pride

Pride and Wickedneſs of the Donor, raſhly accuſing him of Hypocriſie and vain Glory, and foolishly endeavour by ſuch ſpiteful Cavils to juſtifie their own Uncharitableneſs.

We are all bound to be zealous Advocates for God, his Church, and the Poor, againſt a malicious and covetous Generation.

And againſt ill Hands alſo, that no Charity be embezzelled or loſt, that the Church, the Poor, the Publick, may not be wronged, nor any Charitable Gifts of our Pious Anceſtors ſwallowed up by Sacrilegious greedy Worldlings.

Our Laws have herein made very good Proviſion by a Commiſſion for charitable Uſes, and this Country hath lately found the benefit thereof in a prudent and faithful Execution. Further, all that are concern'd as *Feoffees*, for management of publick Charities, muſt be careful to maintain them with uprightneſs and diligence, avoiding Sloth and Selfiſhneſs, which will ruin the moſt noble and uſeful Foundations: Sloth ſuffers them to decay, and Selfiſhneſs pulls them down; this *Solomon* obſerves, telling us, *That by much Slothfulneſs the Building decayeth, and through idleneſs of the Hands the Houſe droppeth through*, and *one* ſelfiſh *Sinner deſtroyeth much good*.

43 Eliz cap. 4.

Eccleſ. 10. 18.

cap. 9. 18.

A publick Spirit, wing'd with Zeal, and arm'd with Integrity, is the moſt effectual Means to preſerve and advance Charity. To conclude, let all that believe in God be careful to maintain good Works; as we have ability and opportunity let us *do Good* to all, from a *right Principle*, to a *good End*, and in a *right Manner*, that ſo *by patient continuance in well doing, ſeeking for Glory and Immortality, we may obtain Eternal Life*, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; to whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt be aſcribed all Glory, Praiſe, Dominion, Thanksgiving, and Obedience for ever and ever. *Amen*.

A N

An Advertiſement.

SIR *Thomas Cookes* of *Bentley*, in the County of *Worceſter* Baronet, hath built at *Bromſgrove* in the ſame County, a large and convenient School-houſe, with a very good dwelling Houſe for a School Maſter. And by Deed bearing date *June* 22. 1693. ſettled on Feofees 50 *l. per An.* for ever, freed from all Taxes and Payments, for the ſaid School in this manner, *viz.* 20. *l. per An.* to a School Maſter, nominated by Sir *Thomas* and his Heirs, and Licenſed by the Biſhop of *Worceſter*, to inſtruct 12 poor Boys in Learning and Religion, as eſtabliſh'd in the Church of *England*, to be admitted into the School between 9 and 12 Years old, and continue at School 6 Years at leaſt; 16 *l. per An.* to buy them Cloaths, *viz.* Blew Coats, Caps, *&c.* 10 *s. per An.* to buy them Books; 10 *s. per An.* for Prayers and a Sermon at *Bromſgrove* Church on the 1ſt of *May*, when the Feofees are to meet for managing the ſaid Charity, and 1 *l.* for their Entertainment yearly on that day; and the 12 *l.* remaining, to be kept as a Stock for placing out the ſaid Boys Apprentices, not allowing to any one Boy above 12 *l.* appointing excellent Rules for the good ordering of the whole Affair.

He alſo gives the preſent School Maſter 20 *l.* more *per An.* for Preaching a Sermon every Lord's day in the Afternoon at *Tardebig*, Sir *Thomas*'s Parith-Church, two Miles from *Bromſgrove*; and further, he gives 10 *l. per An.* to an Uſher in the ſaid School.

He hath likewiſe by Deed, dated about the 24 of *March*, 1695. ſetled on Feofees 50 *l. per An.* for ever, freed from all Taxes and Payments, for a School at *Feckenham* in the ſaid County, appointing a School Maſter and 12 poor Boys, with the ſame Allowances, in the ſame Manner, and under the ſame Rules, with *Bromſgrove* formention'd, only fixing *Thurſday* in *Whitſun*-week, for the Yearly Meeting of the Feofees at *Feckenham*.

The Lord make them Proſper.

Luke 10. 37.

Go, and do thou likewiſe.

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